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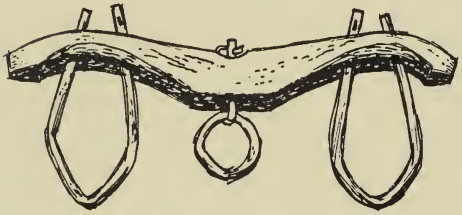

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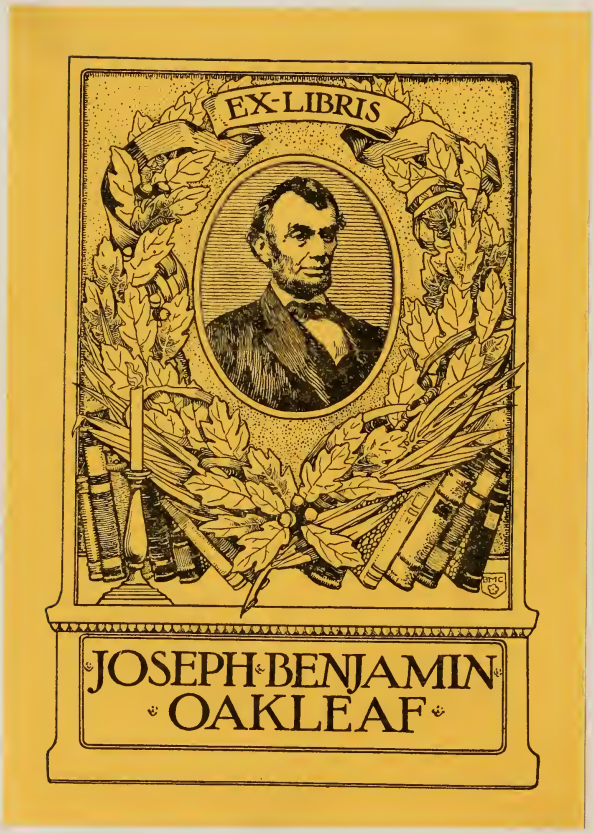
National Republican Club

February twelfth

Waldorf-Astoria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ANNUAL
LINCOLN DINNER

NATIONAL REPUBLICAN CLUB
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY TWELFTH
NINETEEN TWENTY-FIVE

WALDORF-ASTORIA

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"ABRAHAM LINCOLN"

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Honorable WILLIAM M. CALDER
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OLD FASHIONED GRAPEFRUIT COCKTAIL

SORREL SOUP, FRENCH STYLE

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MEDAILLON OF SEA BASS, WITH LOBSTER SAUCE

POTATOES PARISIENNE RISSOLEES

SWEETBREADS, MONTEBELLO

GREEN PEAS, SAUTE IN BUTTER

BREAST OF CHICKEN, A LA CHASSEUR

HEARTS OF LETTUCE, RUSSIAN DRESSING

FANCY ICE CREAMS

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THE BEAR HUNT

An Original Ballad

By ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Abraham Lincoln neither wrote, nor attempted to write, much verse. What little he did write was perhaps the product of a sort of mental exercise—to gratify an impulse to see what he could do.

Writing from Springfield, Illinois, on September 6, 1846, to his former Springfield neighbor, Andrew Johnston, then living in Richmond, Lincoln refers to a promise once made Johnston to 'bore' him with another 'little canto of what I called poetry.' The 1846 message to Johnston fulfilled this promise, the subject of the poem being Matthew Gentry, the insane son of the leading citizen of Gentryville, Indiana, where Lincoln had lived for some thirteen years, from young boyhood on. In 1844 Lincoln was campaigning in Southern Indiana, and it was at this time that the sad condition of his former schoolmate was revealed to him. The first verse of the Matthew Gentry poem, which may be found in the complete works of Lincoln, reads as follows:—

> But here's an object more of dread
> Than aught the grave contains—
> A human form with reason fled
> While wretched life remains.

In the letter sent to Johnston enclosing the verse, Lincoln says: 'If I should ever send another (poem), the subject will be a "Bear Hunt."'

Some time later Lincoln wrote 'The Bear Hunt,' and sent it to his friend. Whether he retained a copy is doubtful, but Johnston apparently kept the manuscript until 1869, when he passed it on to Thomas H. Wynne, of Richmond. The latter bequeathed it to R. A. Brock, of Richmond, by whom it was sold in 1905 to George S. Hellman, of New York, who in turn disposed of it to J. P. Morgan. The original manuscript, in perfect condition, is now in the Morgan Library in New York.

—CHARLES T. WHITE

THE BEAR HUNT

A WILD bear chase didst never see?
  Then hast thou lived in vain—
Thy richest bump of glorious glee
  Lies desert in thy brain.

When first my father settled here,
  'T was then the frontier line;
The panther's scream filled night with fear
  And bears preyed on the swine.

But woe for bruin's short-lived fun
  When rose the squealing cry;
Now man and horse, with dog and gun
  For vengeance at him fly.

A sound of danger strikes his ear;
  He gives the breeze a snuff;
Away he bounds, with little fear,
  And seeks the tangled *rough*.

On press his foes, and reach the ground
  Where 's left his half-munched meal;
The dogs, in circles, scent around
  And find his fresh made trail.

With instant cry, away they dash,
  And men as fast pursue;
O'er logs they leap, through water splash
  And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack
  Bear shuns the open ground,
Through matted vines he shapes his track,
  And runs it, round and round.

The tall, fleet cur, with deep-mouthed voice
  Now speeds him, as the wind;
While half-grown pup, and short-legged fice[1]
  Are yelping far behind.

[1] A small dog of nondescript breed. *Local, U. S. A.*—THE EDITOR

And fresh recruits are dropping in
To join the merry corps;
With yelp and yell, a mingled din—
The woods are in a roar—

And round, and round the chase now goes,
The world 's alive with fun;
Nick Carter's horse his rider throws,
And Mose Hill drops his gun.

Now, sorely pressed, bear glances back,
And lolls his tired tongue,
When as to force him from his track
An ambush on him sprung.

Across the glade he sweeps for flight,
And fully is in view—
The dogs, new fired by the sight
Their cry and speed renew.

The foremost ones now reach his rear;
He turns, they dash away,
And circling now the wrathful bear
They have him full at bay.

At top of speed the horsemen come,
All screaming in a row—
'Whoop!' 'Take him, Tiger!' 'Seize him, Drum!'
Bang—bang! the rifles go!

And furious now, the dogs he tears,
And crushes in his ire—
Wheels right and left, and upward rears,
With eyes of burning fire.

But leaden death is at his heart—
Vain all the strength he plies,
And, spouting blood from every part,
He reels, and sinks, and dies!

And now a dinsome clamor rose,—
'But who should have his skin?'
Who first draws blood, each hunter knows
This prize must always win.

But, who did this, and how to trace
What 's true from what 's a lie,—
Like lawyers in a murder case
They stoutly *argufy*.

Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood,
Behind, and quite forgot,
Just now emerging from the wood
Arrives upon the spot.

With grinning teeth, and up-turned hair
Brim full of spunk and wrath,
He growls, and seizes on dead bear
And shakes for life and death —

And swells, as if his skin would tear,
And growls, and shakes again,
And swears, as plain as dog can swear
That he has won the skin!

Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee,
Nor mind that not a few
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there be
Conceited quite as you.

REPUBLICAN CLUB: Thirty-ninth Annual Lincoln Dinner National Republican Club Thursday, February Twelfth Nineteen Twenty-five Waldorf-Astoria
Also cover title with cut of Lincoln embossed in gilt; N.i. N.p. n.d. (Gilbert T. Washburn & Co., New York, 1925); Tied with silk cord; 6" x 8¾"; pp (8).

NOTE: Contains list of speakers, menu, dinner committee, and reprint of "The Bear Hunt," an original ballad by Abraham Lincoln, from the Atlantic Monthly, February, 1925.

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